Twenty-third Anniversary of the Brooklyn Divine

WORKS OF FINE ARTISANS

An Interesting and Instructructive Review of the History of the Three Tabernacies.

SHOOKLYN, April 8 .- This is a festival day at the Tabernscle. Dr. Talmage is brating the twenty-third anniversary of his settlement in Brooklyn. In white flowers embedded in green at the back of the pulpit stood the inscription, "1869 and 1893." Dr. Talmage's subject was "The Three Tabernacles, a Story of Trials and Triumphe," and his text, Luke Ir, 33, "Let us make three tabernacles."

Our Arab ponies were almost dead with fatigue, as, in December, 1889, we e near the foot of Mount Herma the Holy Land, the mountain called by page "a mountain of ice;" by another, "a guittering breastplate of ice;" by another, "the Mont Blanc of Palestine." Its top has an almost unearthly brilliance. But what must it have been in the time to which my text refers! Peter and James and John were on that mountain top with Josus, when suddenly Christ's face book on the glow of the noonday sun. and Moses and Elijah, who had been slead for centuries, came out from the heavenly world and talked with our Bayiour. What an overwhelming three-Moses, representing the law; Elijah, representing the prophets, and Christ, representing all worlds.

Impetuous Peter was so wrought upon by the presence of this wondrous three that, without waiting for time to consider how preposterous was the proposi tion, he cried out, "Let us make three labernacies; one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elijah." Where would they get the material for building one tabernacle, much less material enough to build two tabernacles, and, still less, how would they get the material for building three? Where would they get the hammers? Where the gold? Where the silver? Where the curtains? Where the costly adornments? Hermon is a barren peak, and to build one tabernacle in such a place would have been an undertaking beyond human achievement, and Peter was propounding the impossi-ble when he cried out in enthusiasm, "Let us build three tabernacles."

And yet that is what this congrega hion have been called to do and have sione. The first Brooklyn Tabernacle was dedicated in 1870 and destroyed by are in 1872. The second Brooklyn Tabernacle was dedicated in 1874 and detroved by fire in 1889. The third Brookyn Tabernacle was dedicated in April, 1891, and in that we are worshiping tolay. What sounded absurd for Peter lo propose, when he said on Mount Hernon, in the words of my text, "Let us saild three tabernacies," we have not only done, but in the mysterious provi-

Bence of God were compelled to do.

We have been unjustly criticised by scople who did not know the facts, n church buildings, and sometimes for not giving as much as we ought to this or that denominational project, and no explanation has yet been made. Before get through with the delivery of this ermon and its publication and distribun, I shall show that no church on orth has ever done more magnificently, and that no church ever conquered more trials, and that no membership over had in it more heroes and heroines than this Brooklyn Tabernacle, and I ean to have it known that any individal or religious newspaper or secular newspaper that hereafter casts any re-section on this church's fidelity and genprosity, is guilty of a wickedness for which God will hold him or it respon-

One year it was sent out through a syndicate of newspapers that this church ras doing nothing in the way of liberality, when we had that year raised \$84,-There has been persistent and hemispheric lying against this church. We have raised during my pastorate, for ghurch building and church purposes, 1998,000, or practically a million dol-lars. Not an Irish famine, or a Charleston earthquake, or an Ohio freshet, or a Chicago conflagration, but our church was among the first to help. We have given free seats in the morning and evening services to 240,000 strangers a year, and that in twenty years would amout to 4,800,000 auditors. We have peceived into our membership 5,357 embers, and that is only a small porson of the number of those who have bere been converted to God from all parts of this land and from other lands Under the blessing of God and through he kindness of the printing press my ermons now go every week into every seighborhood in Christendom, and are egularly translated into nearly all the reat languages of Europe and Asia he syndicates having charge of this rmonic publication informed me a few ays ago that my printed sermons every sek, in this and other lands, go into he hands of 25,000,000 people. During e last year, I am authoritatively in ormed, over 2,000 different periodicals rere added to the list of those who nake this publication, and yet there are ninisters of the Gospel and religious everpapers that systematically and in-lostriously and continuously charge his church with idleness and selfishness

I call the attention of the whole earth this outrage that has been heaped pon the Brooklyn Tabernacle, though more consecrated, benevolent and plendid convocation of men and women plendid convocation of men and women fore never gathered together cutside of seven. I have never before responded by these injustices and probably will sever refer to them again, but I wish be people of this country and other puntries to know that what they read concerning the selfshness and indolence and lack of benevolence and lack of ammionary spirit on the part of this thurch is from top to bottom and from turn to stern falsehood destardly false lood diabolical falsehood. What is nid against myself has no effect, except its that of a course Turkish towel, the abbing down by which improves circuation and produces good health.

But this continuous misropresentation f my beloved church, in the name of imighty God, I denounce, while I apme that justice is done this people, ho, within a few years, have in

HE TOLD OF TRIALS | through a struggle that no other church in any land or any age has been called to endure, and I pray God that no other church may ever be called to endure, viz., the building of three tabernacles. I sak the friends of the Brooklyn Tabernucle to cut out this sermon from the nevalspers and put it in their pocketbooks, so that they can intelligently answer our falsifiers, whether clerical

> And with these you may put that other statement, which recently went through the country, and which I saw in Detroit, which said that the Brooklyn Tabernacie had a hard financial struggle because it had all along been paying such enormous salaries to its pastor, Dr. Tulmage, when the fact is that, after our last dieaster and for two years. I gave all my salary to the church buildng fund, and I received \$6,000 less than nothing. In other words, in addition to serving this church gratuitously for two years, I let it have \$6,000 for building purposes. Why is it that people could not do us justice and say that all our financial struggle as a church camo from doing what Peter, in my text, absurdly proposed to do, but which, in the inscrutable providence of God, we were compelled to do-build three taber-

Now, I feel better that this is off my mind. The rest of my sermon will be spun out of hosannaha. I announce to you this day that we are at last, as a church, in smooth waters. Arrange ments have been made by which our financial difficulties are now fully and satisfactorily adjusted. Our income will exceed our outgo, and Brooklyn Tabernacle will be yours and belong to you and your children after you, and anything you see contrary to this you may put down to the confirmed habit which some people have got of misrepre-senting this church and they cannot stop. When I came to Brooklyn I came to a mall church and a big indebtedness. We have now this, the largest Protestant church in America, and financially as a congregation we are worth, over and beond all indebtedness, considerably more than \$150,000.

I have preached here twenty-three years, and I expect, if my life and health are continued, to preach here twenty-three years longer, although we will all do well to remember that our breath is in our nostrils, and any hour we may be called to give an account of our stewardship. All we ask for the future is that you do your best, contributing all you can to the support of our institutions. Our best days are yet to come; our greatest revivals of religion and our mightiest outpourings of the Holy Ghost. We have got through the Red sea, and stand today on the other bank

clapping the cymbals of victory.

Do you wonder that last Subbath I asked you in the midst of the service to rise and sing with jubilant voice the long meter Doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise him, all creatures here below Praise him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Yes, twenty-three years have pass since I came to live in Brooklyn, and they have been to me eventful years. It was a prostrated church to which came, a church so flat down it could drop no further. Through controversies would be useless to was well nigh extinct, and for a long while it had been without a pastor. But nineteen members could be mustered to sign a call for my coming. As a com-mittee was putting that call before me in an upper room in my house in Philadelphia, there were two other committees on similar errands from other churches in other rooms, whom my wife was entertaining and keeping apart from un-

happy collision.
The auditorium of the Brooklyn church to which I came defied all the laws of acoustics; the church had a steeple that was the derision of the town, and a high box pulpit which shut in the preacher as though he were dangerous to be let loose, or it acted as a barricade that was unnecessary to keep back the people, for they were so few that a minister of ordinary muscle could have kept back all who were there. My first Sabbath in Brooklyn was a sad day, for I did not realize how far the church was down until then, and on the evening of that day my own brother, through whose pecket I entered the ministry, died, and the tidines of his decease reached me at 6 e'clock in the evening,

and I was to preach at half past 7. But from that day the blessing of God was on us, and in three months we began the enlargement of the building. Before the close of that year we resolved to construct the first Tabernacle. It was to be a temporary structure, and, therefore, we called it a tabernacle instead of a temple. What should be the style of architecture was the immediate question. I had always thought that the amphithentrical shape would be approprinte for a church. Two distinguis architects were employed, and after much hovering over designs, they announced to us that such a building was impossible for religious purposes, as it would not be churchly, and would subject themselves and us to ruinous critirism; in other words, they were not ready for a revolution in church archi-

Uttarly disheartened as to my favorite style of architecture, I said to the trustees, "Build anything you please and I must be satisfied." But one morning a young architect appeared at my house and asked if we had yet selected a plan for our church. I said, "No, and what we want we cannot get." "What style if building do you want?" he asked. And taking out a lead pencil and a leter envelope from my pocket, in less than s minute, by a few curved lines, I indisated in the rough what we wanted. "But," I said, "old architects tell us it can't be done, and there is no use in your trying." He said: "I can do it. Ho ong can I have to make out the plans?

I said, "This evening at 8 o'clock every-thing is to be decided." At 8 o'clock of that evening th architect presented his plans and the bids of builder and mason were presented, and in five minutes after plans were presented they were unani-mously adopted. So that I would not e in the way of the trustees during the work I went to Europe, and when I got back the church was well nigh done. But here came in a staggering hindrance. We expected to pay for the new church by the sale of the old build-ing. The old one had been sold, but just at the time we must have the money the purchasers backed out, and

we had two churches and so money By the help of God and the indomitable and unparalleled energy of our trustees there and there one of them

present today, but the most in a better world), we got the building ready for consecration, and on Sept. 26, 1870, morning and evening dedicatory servtess were held, and in the afternoon the children with sweet and multitudinens voices consecrated the place to God. Twenty thousand dollars were raised that day to pay a floating debt. In the morning old Dr. Stephen H. Tyng, the glory of the Episcopal church and the Chrysoetom of the American pulpit, preached a sermon which lingered in its racious effects as long as the building stood. He read enough out of the Epis copal prayer book to keep himself from being reprimanded by his bishop for preaching at a non-Episcopal service, and we, although belonging to another denomination, responded with heartiness, as though we were used to the

liturgy "Good Lord, deliver us!" During the short time we occupied that building we had a constant down pour of religious awakening. Hosannah! l'en million years in heaven will have no power to dim my memory of the glorious times we had in that first Tabernacle, which, because of its invasion of the usnal style of church architecture, was called by some "Talmage's Hippo-drome," by others, "Church of the Holy Circus," and by other mirthful nomenclature. But it was a building perfect for acousties, and stood long enough to have its imitation in all the large cities of America and to completely revolutionize church architecture. People eaw that it was the common sense way

of seating an audience. Instead of putting them in an angular church, where each one chiefly saw the back part of somebody else's head, the audience were arranged in semicircle. so that they could see one another's faces, and the auditorium was a great family circle seated around a fireplace, which was the pulpit. It was an iron struc-ture, and we supposed fireproof, but the insurance companies looked at it, and after we had gone too far to stop in its construction, they declined to insure it, except for a mere nothing, declaring that, being of iron, if the inflammable material between the shoets of iron took fire no engine hose could play upon it. And they were right. During those days we educated and sent out from a lay college under our charge some twelve hundred young mon and women. many of them becoming evangelists and many of them becoming regularly ordained preachers, and I meet them in all parts of the land toiling mightily for

One Surday morning in December, 1872, the thermometer nearly down to zero, I was on my way to church. There was an excitement in the street and much smoke in the air. Fire engines dashed past. But my mind was on the sermon I was about to preach, until some one rushed up and told that our church was going up in the same kind of charlot that Elijah took from the banks of the Jordan. That Sunday morning tragedy, with its wringing of hands and frozen tears on the cheek of many thousands standing in the street, and the crash that shook the earth, is as vivid as though it were

yesterday. But it was not a perfect loss. All were anxious to do something. and as on such occasions sensible people members, at the risk of his life, rushed in among the fallen walls, mounted the pulpit and took a glass of water from the table and brought it in safety to the street. So you see it was not a total loss. Within an hour from many churches came kind invitations to occupy their buildings, and hanging against a lamppost, near the destroyed building, before 12 o'clock that morning, was a board with the inscription, "The congregation of Brooklyn Tabernacle will rorship tonight in Plymouth church."

Mr. Beecher made the opening prayer, which was full of commiseration for me and my homeless flock, and I preached that night the sermon that I intended to preach that morning in my own church. the text concerning the precious ala-baster box broken at the feet of Christ, and sure enough we had one very procious broken that day. We were, as a church, obliterated. "But arise and build," said many voices. Another architect took the amphitheatrical plan of a church, which, in the first instance, was necessarily somewhat rude, and developed it into an elaborate plan that was immediately adopted. But how to raise the money for such an expensive undertaking was the question—expensive not because of any senseless adornment proposed, but expensive because of the immense size of the building needed to

hold our congregation.
It was at that time when for years our entire country was suffering, not from a financial panic, but from that long continued financial depression which all business men remember, as the cloud hung heavy year after year and com-mercial establishments without number went down. Through what struggles we passed the Eternal God and some brave souls today remember. Many a time would I have gladly accepted calls to some other field, but I could not leave the flock in the wilderness. At last, after in the interregnum having worshiped in our beautiful Academy of Music, on the morning of Feb. 22, 1874, the anniversary of the Washington who conquered impossibilities and on the Sabbath that always celebrates the resurrection, Dr. Byron Sunderland, chap-lain of the United States senate, thrilled us through and through with a dedicatory sermon from Haggai ii, 9, "The glory of this house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of

The corner stone of that building had been laid by the illustrious and now enthroned Dr. Irenseus Prime. On the platform on dedication day sat, among others, Dr. Dowling, of the Baptist church; Dr. Crook, of the Methodist church; Mr. Beecher, of the Congregational church, and Dr. French, of the Presbyterian church. Hosannah! Another \$35,000 was raised on that day. The following Sunday 828 souls were received into our communion, mostly on confession of faith. At two other communions over 500 souls joined at each one. At another ingathering 628 souls entered this communion, and so many of those gathered throngs have already entered heaven that we expect to feel at home when we get there. My! my! Won't we be glad to see them—the men and women who stood by us in days Rint were dark and days that were jubi lant! Homannah!

The work done in that church on Schermerhorn street can never be undown. What sacrifices on the part of many, who gave almost till the blood cemet What halletuisher What violo-

ries! What wedding marches played with full organ! What haptisms! What sucraments! What obsequies! One of them on a mony Sabbath afternoon. when all Brooklyn seemed to sympa-thize, and my eldest son, bearing my own name, lay beneath the pulpit in the and a score of ministers on and around the platform tried to interpret how it was lest that one who had just come to manhood, and with brightest worldly prospects, should be taken, and we left ith a heart that will not cease to ache until we meet where tears never fall.

That second Tabernacle! What a stu

pendons reminiscence! But if the Peter of my text had known what an under taking it is to build two tabernacies, he would not have proposed two, to say nothing of three. As an anniversary sermon must needs be somewhat autobiographical, let me say I have not been idle. During the standing of those two Tabernacies fifty-two books, under as many titles, made up from my writings, were published. During that time, also, I was permitted to discuss all the great questions of the day in all the great cities of this continent, and in many of them many times, besides preaching and lecturing ninety-six times in England, Scotlant and Ireland in ninety-four

During all that time, as well as since, I was engaged in editing a religious newspaper, believing that such a peri-odical was capable of great usefulness, and I have been a constant contributor to newspapers and periodicals. Méan-while all things had become easy in the Brooklyn Tabernacle. On a Sabbath in October, 1889, I announced to my congregation that I would in a few weeks visit the Hely Land and that the officers of the church had consented to my going, and the wish of a lifetime was about to be fulfilled. The next Sabbath morning, about 2 o'clock or just after midnight, a member of my household awakened me by saying that there was a strange light in the sky. A thunder storm had left the air full of electricity, and from horizon to horizon everything seemed to blaze. But that did not dis turb me, until an observation taken from the cupols of my house declared that the second Tabernacle was putting on red wings.

I scouted the idea and turned over on the pillow for another sleep, but a num-ber of excited voices called me to the roof, and I went up and saw clearly defined in the night the fiery catafalque of our second Tabernscle. When I saw that I said to my family: "I think that ends my work in Brooklyn. Surely the Lord will not call a minister to build three churches in one city. The building of one church generally ends the usefulness of a pastor; how can any one proside at the building of three churches?' But before twenty-four hours had passed we were compelled to cry out, with Peter of my text, "Let us build three tabernacles." We must have a home somewhere.

The old site had ceased to be the center of our congregation, and the center of the congregation, as near as we could find it, is where we now stand. Having selected the spot, should we build on it a barn or a Tabernacle beautiful and commodious? Our common sense, as all as our religion, command ter. But what push, what industry, what skill, what self sacrifice, what faith in God were necessary. Impediments and hindrances without number were throws in the way, and had it not been for the perseverance of our church officials and the practical help of many people and the prayers of millions of good souls in all parts of the earth and the blessing of Almighty God, the work would not have been done.

But it is done, and all good people who behold the structure feel in their hearts if they do not utter with their lips, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts." On the third Sabbath of last April this church was dedicated, Dr. Hamlin, of Washington, preaching an inspiring termon, Dr. Wendell Prime, of New York, offering the dedicatory prayer, and some fifteen clergymen during the day taking part in the services. Hosannah!

How suggestive to many of us are the words spelled out in flowers above the pulpit-"1963" and "1892"-for those dates bound what raptures, what griefs, what struggles, what triumphs! I men tion it as a matter of gratitude to God that in these twenty-three years I have missed but one Sabbath through physical indisposition, and but three in the thirtysix years of my ministry. And now, having reached this twenty-third mile stone. I start anew. I have in my memorandom books analyses of more sermons than I have ever yet preached, and I have preached, as near as I can tell

During these past years I have learned two or three things. Among others I have learned that "all things work together for good." My positive mode of ching has sometimes seemed to stir the hostilities of all earth and hell. Feeling called upon fifteen years ago to ex-plore underground New York city life, that I might report the evils to be combatted, I took with me two elders of my church and a New York police commis sioner and a policeman, and I explored and reported the horrors that needed removal, and the allurements that endangered our young men. There came upon me an outburst of assumed indignation that frightened almost everybody but myself. That exploration put into my church thirty or forty newspaper correspondents, from north, south, east and west, which opened for me new avenues in which to preach the Gospel that otherwise would never have been

Years passed on and I preached a series of sermons on Amusements, and a false report of what I did say—and one of the rmone said to have been preached by me was not mine in a single wordroused a violence that threatened me with poison and dirk and pistol and other forms of extinguishment, until the chief of Brooklyn police, without any suggestion from me, took possession of the church with twenty-four policemen to see that no harm was done. That excitement opened many doors, which I entered for preaching the Gospel.

After awhile came an ecclesiastical

trial in which I was arraigned by people who did not like the way I did things. who did not like the way I did things, and although I was acquitted of all the charges, the contest shook the American church. That battle made me more friends than anything that ever happened and gave me Christendom and more than Christendom for my weekly audience. On the demolition of each church we got a better and a larger church, and not a disaster, not a carrie-

ture, not a persecution, not an assault, during all these twenty-three years but turned out for our advantage, and ought I not to believe that "all things work together for good?" Hosunnah

Another lesson I have learned during these twenty-three years is that it is no necessary to preach error or pick flaws in the old Bible in order to get an audience the old Book without any fixing up is good enough for me, and higher criti cism, as it is called, means lower religion. Higher criticism is another form of infidelity, and its disciples will be lieve less and less, until many of then will land in Nowhere, and become the worshipers of an eternal "What is it? The most of these higher critics seem to be seeking notoriety by pitching into strike your grandmother. The old Gos pel put in modern parase, and without any of the conventionalities and adapted to all the wants and woes of humanity I have found the mightiest magnet, and we have never lacked an audience

Next to the blessing of my own family I account the blessing that I have always had a great multitude of people to preach to. That old Gospel I have preached to you these twenty-three years of my Brooklyn pastorate, and that old Gospel I will preach till I die, and charge my son, who is on the way to the ministry, to preach it after me for I remember Paul's thunderbolt, "It any man preach any other Gospel, let him be accursed." And now, as I stand here on my twenty-third anniversary, I see two audiences. The one is made up of all those who have worshiped with us in the past, but have been translated to higher realms.

What groups of children-too fair and too sweet and too lovely for earth, and the Lord took them, but they seem present today. The croup has gone out of the swollen throat, and the pallor from the cheek, and they have on them the health and radiance of heaven. Hail. groups of glorified children! How glad I am to have you come back to us today! And here sit those aged ones who departed this life leaving an awful vacancy in home and church. Where are your staffs, and where are your gray locks, and where your stooping shoul ders, ye blessed old folks? "Oh," they say, "we are all young again, and the bath in the river from under the throne has made us agile and bounding. In the place from which we come they use no staffs, but scepters!" Hail, fathers and mothers in Israel! How glad we

are to have you come back to greet us! But the other audience I see in imagination is made up of all those to whom we have had opportunity as a church, directly or indirectly, of presenting the Gospel. Yea, all my parishes seem to come back today. The people of my first charge in Belleville, N. J. The people of my second charge in Syracuse, N. Y. The people of my third charge in Philadelphia. And the people of all these three Brooklyn Tabernacles. Look at them, and all those whom through the printing press we have invited to God and heaven now seeming to sit in galleries above galleries-fifty galleries. a hundred galleries, a thousand galleries

I great them all in your name and in Christ's name, all whom I have confronted from my first sermon in my first villago charge, where my lips trembled and my knees knocked to gether from affright, speaking from the text, Jeremiah i, 6, "Ah, Lord God, be hold I cannot speak, for I am a child!" until the sermon I preach today from Luke ix, 33, "Lot us make three tabernacles," those of the past and the present, all gather in imagination if not in reality, all of us grateful to God for past mercies, all of us sorry for misimproved opportunities, all hopeful for eternal raptures, and while the visible and the it visible audiences of the present and the past commingle, I give out to be sung by those who are here today, and to be sung by those who shall read of this scene of reminiscence and congratulation, that hymn which has been rolling on since Isaac Waits started it one hundred and fifty years ago:

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